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C O N F I D E N T I A L DHAKA 000430

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [BG](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR MEETS WITH LAW MINISTER AND POLITICAL SECRETARY

SIPDIS

REF: A. DHAKA 0361

[B](#). DHAKA 0345

[C](#). 04 DHAKA 04382

Classified By: Ambassador Harry K. Thomas, reasons para 1.5 (b),(d)

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY. On January 31, Ambassador met with Law Minister Moudud Ahmed to express concern about the Kibria killing and the rise in extra-judicial killings. He also raised ratification of UN Counter-terrorism conventions, the Ahmadiyyas, a pending DOE agreement with the BDG to manage nuclear waste, and the draft bilateral Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA). END SUMMARY

[1](#)2. (C) Regarding the January 27 attack that killed Awami League leader Shah AMS Kibria (ref a), Ambassador emphasized the critical importance of properly investigating and resolving the incident. Ahmed said that the BDG should not be involved in the investigation and should only assist law enforcement agencies because the BDG "cannot share responsibility." Instead, he felt all the responsibility should be given to the investigating body whether it be Interpol or the FBI. Ambassador replied that such assistance from US law enforcement agencies is only possible if they are given full access to the crime scene and witnesses.

[1](#)3. (C) Ambassador also expressed strong concern about the growing number of extra-judicial killings committed by the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) and other police units (ref b). He urged the BDG to use due process, not "crossfire" killings, to attack lawlessness. While the Ambassador has not publically criticized RAB, he said, the developing pattern of extra-judicial killings could result in Leahy ammendment sanctions that would withhold USG-funded training and assort for units and personnel associated with the killings. Ahmed replied only that he hoped that the RAB's record of extra-judicial killings "won't have to continue like this."

[1](#)4. (SBU) Of the 12 UN Counter-terrosism conventions, Bangladesh has only adopted three, Ambassador noted. He recounted that Foreign Minister Morshed Khan had recently told him that Bangladesh would ratify five of the remaining nine conventions by the end of April. The other four conventions do not apply to Bangladesh because they are related to nuclear weapons. Ahmed indicated that he agreed with this outlook

[1](#)5. (C) On the subject of Ahmadiyyas, Ambassador expressed concern with the ban on their publications and fear that, if such a ban were enforced or officially gazetted, other minority groups could be subsequently targeted by extremists. Ahmed said he believed the Bangladeshi Supreme Court would over-turn the ban (reftel c) and that he personally opposes the ban promoted by "religious fanatics and zealots." The Law Minister, however, has no role or ability to formally oppose the ban of publications.

[1](#)6. (SBU) Ahmed said that the pending Department of Energy agreement with Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission to manage nuclear waste should be addressed within two weeks, and that he will look forward to reviewing the TIFA draft when it reaches his office for vetting. Ambassador expressed appreciation for the Law Ministry's cooperation in securing legislation last year that extended trade union rights to the EPZ's and for its help in making prosecution of TIP offenders a top priority.

[1](#)7. (C) In a subsequent meeting with PMO Political Secretary Harris Chowdhury, Ambassador repeated USG concerns about RAB and the implications of the Leahy ammendment. Chowdhury took advantage of the meeting to assure Ambassador of PM Zia's commitment to solve the Kibria killing.

THOMAS